

the Mexican people was very great, and that President Zedillo was pursuing the proper course.

And I would hope that—it's not for me to say, but if I were a Mexican citizen, I would be very pleased with the performance of Mexico and its economy and its markets over the last several weeks in what has been a very challenging time for the world. And I think we need to focus—instead of focusing on the changes in these markets on a daily basis, our goal should be to work with all of the developing countries and all the sort of booming economies to make sure their underlying fundamentals are right.

If the underlying fundamental economic policies are correct, then over time the markets will follow that, and that should be the key. I think Secretary Rubin and his colleagues did a good thing to try to stabilize the situation in Asia, for example, but the long-term goal is, if the fundamentals are right, eventually you will have good markets and a good economy. That's the most important thing, is to have a good economy for ordinary people.

Q. [Inaudible]—economy? In Mexico?

President Clinton. Where?

Q. In Mexico or the developing economies?

President Clinton. I just have to say, to me, just as an observer and a passionate supporter of democratic government over my lifetime, that of course Mexico has a lot of challenges. But if you look at this transformation you've made to a multiparty democracy, it's quite amazing that it's happened in a way that we've seen stability maintained, government's freedom to pursue a responsible economic course maintained. It's been very impressive to all of us who are on the outside looking in that Mexico has made a dramatic change in its political system, which I think will stand you in very good stead over the long run.

We find our competitive system—although none of us who are in office like competition—but our system has stabilized America over the long run. I think Mexico will be stabilized by the political transformation, but it's amazing that it's happened so quickly and so well. And so for me, the

political developments there have been interesting and very impressive, very hopeful.

Q. You don't see any obstacles—

President Clinton. There are always obstacles. There will always be obstacles.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:20 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at the Signing Ceremony for the Organization of American States Hemispheric Arms Trafficking Convention

November 14, 1997

Thank you very much, Mr. Gurria, Secretary General Gaviria, President Zedillo, distinguished permanent representatives of the Organization of American States, to all my fellow Americans who are here, and especially to two Members of our Congress, Senator Dodd and Congressman Gilman.

Today our 34 democracies are speaking with one voice, acting with one conviction, leading toward one goal, to stem the flow of illegal guns, ammunitions, and explosives in our hemisphere. Three years ago at the United Nations, the United States called on others to work with us to shut down the gray markets that outfit terrorists, drug traffickers, and criminals with guns.

Here at home we have prohibited arms dealers from acting as middlemen for illicit sales overseas, strengthened residency requirements for gun purchasers, banned foreign visitors from buying guns here in the United States, tightened export licenses to make sure that legally exported weapons are not diverted to illegal uses. But in an era where our borders are all more open to the flow of legitimate commerce, problems like trafficking in weapons and explosives simply cannot be solved by one nation alone.

Last May in Mexico, President Zedillo and I pledged to work together for a hemisphere-wide agreement to curb the illegal arms trade. I thank President Zedillo for Mexico's leadership. Mr. Secretary General, I thank

you and the OAS member states for concluding this agreement in record time. We understand the magnitude of the problem. In the last year alone, thousands of handguns and rifles, hundreds of thousands of rounds of ammunition destined for illegal export have been seized in our nations.

The illegal export of firearms is indeed not just a hemispheric but a worldwide problem and demands an international response. Last year, the United States Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms received approximately 30,000 requests just from OAS member states to trace weapons used in crimes. Gun trafficking is an issue of national security for all of us and a matter of neighborhood security for the Americas.

This convention will neither discourage nor diminish the lawful sale, ownership, or use of guns, but it will help us to fight the unlawful trade in guns that contributes to the violence associated here in America with drugs and gangs.

If we want also here in America to see the powerful trend of democracy and free markets and peace in our hemisphere continue, we must also help our neighbors to fight the illegal trade in guns so that the foundations of democracies will not be eroded by violent crime and corruption.

Now, this convention mandates four key steps to achieve our common goals:

First, it requires countries to establish and maintain a strong system of export, import, and international transit licenses for arms, ammunitions, and explosives to make sure that weapons won't move without explicit permission from all the countries concerned.

Second, other nations will join us in putting markings on firearms, not only when they're made but also when they're imported. If guns are diverted from legal purposes, we will then be better able to trace their path and find out exactly when and how they got into the wrong hands.

Third, nations will adopt laws that criminalize illicit arms production and sales as we have already done, so that those who seek to profit from illegal trade in guns know they will pay a stiff penalty in jail.

Fourth, we will step up every level of information sharing from common routes used by arms traffickers to ways that smugglers are

concealing their guns and tips on how to detect them. If we work together, we can put the black market in weapons out of business.

Let me say in a larger sense to all of you that this agreement underscores the new spirit of the Americas and the new dynamism of this organization. The mood of the negotiations was not one of recrimination but of cooperation on behalf of a common goal. We need more of that. Our hemisphere is setting a new standard for the world in taking on global challenges: last year, with our path-breaking convention against corruption; today with this arms trafficking agreement. Together, we're showing the way of the 21st century world: democratic partners working together to improve the prosperity and security of all their people.

I'm especially pleased to be joined today, and to join you today, with President Zedillo. The United States and Mexico are working hard to forge a true partnership founded on mutual respect, a partnership as broad as our border is long. We see it taking shape in the creation of NAFTA, in our common commitment to the Firearms Convention, in our alliance against drug-trafficking, in our work with other American nations to increase multilateral cooperation and strengthen our hemispheric institutions to combat the scourge of drugs.

Over the last 2 days, the United States and Mexico have reached an agreement on extradition that will allow cross-border criminals to be tried in both countries while the evidence is still fresh. We've pledged to build a new Rio Grande bridge to help link our people together. We've taken an important step to fully demarcate our common border, and agreed to promote environmental commercial cooperation. We've agreed also to work together to combat climate change, because developed and developing countries must reduce greenhouse gas emissions, together, that are warming the atmosphere.

Witnessing the signing of this important convention, I am especially proud of the renewed vitality of the OAS and the renewed deep cooperation between the United States and Mexico. It can make a difference for our entire community of nations—to build a better, safer future for all our people.

And now I'd like to ask you to join me in welcoming our good friend President Ernesto Zedillo of Mexico.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:32 p.m. in the Hall of the Americas at the Organization of American States. In his remarks, he referred to Jose Gurria, Mexican Secretary of Foreign Affairs, and Cesar Gaviria, Secretary General, Organization of American States.

Declaration of President Clinton and President Zedillo

November 14, 1997

We met to carry forward the mature partnership between our two governments, marked by mutual respect, to review progress on the work program launched at our last meeting in Mexico City in May, and to continue our personal contacts in order to spur further cooperation on issues of vital importance to our citizens.

Since our meeting six months ago:

- We have concluded negotiations in the Organization of American States of an hemispheric convention against illegal firearms trafficking, originally proposed by Mexico and strongly endorsed by the two of us at our meeting in Mexico City last May.
- We have concluded a Protocol to our Extradition Treaty, which will permit temporary extradition to allow cross border criminals to be tried in both jurisdictions while the evidence is still fresh. We exchanged instruments of ratification of our Maritime Boundary Treaty, thereby taking an important step to fully demarcate our common maritime border.
- We have concluded a Memorandum of Intent on Environmental Commercial Cooperation.
- The team of researchers commissioned by our two governments has completed its binational study on migration, and submitted its report.
- The High Level Contact Group submitted to us an Executive Summary of the Joint Counternarcotics Strategy which we mandated in our bilateral Alliance Against Drugs.
- Under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) trade between our two countries continues to expand, enriching our societies and employing an ever-larger number of our workers. Thus, since we last met, Mexico has become the United States' second largest market, while the United States remains Mexico's largest market.

Looking to the future, we agreed to work together in the international negotiations on climate change. Our governments will promote the growth of electronic commerce and development of the Internet. We confirm our commitment to the goals of our bilateral Alliance Against Drugs, and to the development of measures through which we can appraise our efforts in our common fight. We will work to expand hemisphere-wide counternarcotics cooperation and to strengthen the Organization of American States' capacity to support this priority task. We will promote the preparatory work and successful conclusion of the special session of the UN General Assembly to enhance global cooperation against illicit drugs.

We have achieved progress in the implementation of our May 6 *Joint Declaration on Migration*:

- We have agreed on appropriate procedures at the border and inside the US for the orderly and safe repatriation of Mexican nationals with full regard for their dignity and human rights and the principle of family unity.
- We have enhanced the capacities of the eight liaison mechanisms at border cities to promote protection of migrants and safety along our common border.
- We have taken actions between Mexican Consuls and Immigration and Naturalization Service Directors to improve consular protection in pursuance of the agreements signed by both governments.
- We agreed to a new cooperative agenda which will explore and respond to the linkage between migration and development in both countries.
- We instructed our officials to work with the conclusions of our binational study on migration to involve communities on